

# SENATE HISPANIC BRIEFING ROOM

## Cornyn to Mark 4-Year Judges Anniversary with Hispanic Leaders

Washington, D.C.—Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) will hold a press conference Monday, May 9, at 11 a.m., on Capitol Hill in the Senate Swamp (Russell Park), with Hispanic leaders to mark the four-year anniversary of President George W. Bush's original judicial nominations, including filibustered appeals court nominees Priscilla Owen (5<sup>th</sup> Circuit) and Miguel Estrada (D.C. Circuit, withdrawn). Supporters from the Hispanic community will call for an end to the unprecedented judicial obstruction and back Majority Leader Bill Frist's efforts to restore precedent for fair, up-or-down votes for all judicial nominees on the Senate floor.

**WHO:** Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)  
Robert de Posada, President,  
The Latino Coalition  
Rev. Miguel Rivera, National Coalition of  
Latino Clergy/CONLAMIC

**WHAT:** Press Conference

**WHERE:** Senate Swamp - Russell Park  
(Constitution & Delaware, across from the  
Russell Senate Building)

Rain Location: Hart Senate Building, Room 902

**WHEN:** Monday, May 9, 11 a.m.

## THE SENATE THE WEEK AHEAD

**Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

The Senate stands adjourned until Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at 2:00 p.m. when it will resume consideration of H.R. 3, the Highway bill.

Votes are expected to occur at approximately 5:30 p.m. on Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>.

\*\*\*NOTE: We expect to consider the Conference Report to accompany the Supplemental Appropriations bill this week, as well \*\*\*

## JOIN THE FRIST HISPANIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

We need individuals like you to help us get the message out. Please e-mail me at [noe\\_garcia@frist.senate.gov](mailto:noe_garcia@frist.senate.gov) if you are ready to join the FRIST TEAM.

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## ADVISE & CONSENT WORKING GROUP WRITE A LETTER TO YOUR EDITOR TODAY!

Please take a moment and read this op-ed template and add your own thoughts and send it to your editor today.

Four years ago today [May 9<sup>th</sup>], President Bush announced his plans to nominate Miguel Estrada for a seat on the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals. By all appearances, his nomination should have proceeded smoothly. Estrada, a Honduran immigrant, exemplifies the American dream. He has a brilliant legal mind, went to Harvard Law School, clerked for a Supreme Court justice, and worked in both the Bush and Clinton administrations. Republicans and Democrats alike heralded his abilities while the non-partisan American Bar Association pronounced him "highly qualified" to serve on the court.

But many Senate Democrats did not see it that way. Starting in February 2003, they took the unprecedented step of denying a judicial nominee with majority support the courtesy of an up-or-down vote. The debate over Estrada's nomination endured for over 100 hours and Senators supporting his nomination made a record seven attempts to bring it up for a vote. Each time, they failed. After two years, Miguel Estrada withdrew his name from consideration.

But he wasn't the only judge denied a vote. On the same day he nominated Estrada, President Bush also selected Priscilla Owen for an appeals court judgeship. Like him, she has an impressive resume. As an elected judge on the Texas Supreme Court for the last ten years, she received 84 percent of the vote and the endorsement of every major newspaper in the state.

Although she ran for office as a Republican, Democrats came to hold her legal judgment in high respect. Former Justice Raul Gonzalez, a Democrat, provided one point of view: "I found her to be apolitical, extremely bright, diligent in her work, and of the highest integrity," he said. "I recommend her for confirmation without reservation."

But even though Justice Owen received support from 84% percent of Texans—Democrat and Republican alike—the same Senate Democrats who fought Miguel Estrada's nomination have aligned themselves against hers. It's hard to believe that someone can get 84% of the vote in Texas but not even the courtesy of a vote to be confirmed by the United States Senate.

Judicial obstruction breaks longstanding Senate traditions, keeps qualified people off the bench, and denies many Americans with pressing legal matters a prompt hearing of their legal concerns.

Senate majority leader Bill Frist has proposed a solution called the Fairness Rule: a floor vote for all nominees to Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court, up to 100 hours of floor debate, and protection of the filibuster on legislation. So far, however, it appears that Democratic leaders are unwilling to give these proposals careful consideration.

The Senate's job, above all is to vote. But the Senate has refused to vote. Quite simply, senators should do what the people elected them to do. Priscilla Owen deserves a vote.

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